

# SPREADING KINDNESS

Brookdale Riverwalk residents and staff aim to brighten people's spirits with flowers, hugs, handshakes and smiles



HENRY A. BARRIOS / THE CALIFORNIAN

**Brookdale Riverwalk Senior Living resident Marie Simonich surprises Laura Tien with a flower during Random Acts of Kindness Day Friday. Tien was enjoying a day with her children at the Park at River Walk when residents from Brookdale Riverwalk arrived to offer people at the park some kindness and flowers.**

BY JOSEPH LUIZ  
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It's not every day that a stranger comes up to you, says hello and gives you a flower, but that's the experience many people had around town Friday.

Senior living community Brookdale Riverwalk held its second annual Random Acts of Kindness Day on Friday. Residents and associates went out to the Park at River Walk, Almondale Elementary School, Rosewood Skilled Nursing and several other places to deliver a total of 500 flowers, as well as hugs, handshakes and smiles.

"I think it's especially important these days to be reminded that we can make others feel good with very small gestures or words or deeds. It means a lot these days," said resident Betty Newman, who helped prepare the flowers and delivered them Friday.

Newman said that to her, it's normal now for people to be rude or disrespectful to others, or they don't show any care for other people. Newman said activities like the one on Friday may have a stronger impact



**Simonich gives Frankie Flores a flower and a warm smile as he prepares his bait for fishing. See more photos at Bakersfield.com.**

on people who don't usually receive kindness from strangers.

"Sometimes you have to make a bit of an effort to make people feel good about themselves, let them know that they are special," she said. "I think they're more apt to do

the same for others if it happens to them."

Diane Ashburn, director of financial services at Brookdale, helped hand out the flowers this year. This

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## HOMICIDE CASE

# Police arrest three in killing of 3-year-old

Boy fatally shot in November home invasion in which woman, 5-year-old also injured

BY JOSEPH LUIZ  
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Three people have been arrested on suspicion of murder in the November killing of a 3-year-old boy, the Bakersfield Police Department announced Friday.

The BPD said Tyrone Deangelo Johnson, 21, David Reagan Palms, 19, and Myeisha Bernice Dale, 29, were arrested Friday in connection with the Nov. 10 shooting that killed Major Sutton, 3, in the 800 block of Pershing Street.

The suspects have been booked into Kern County Jail on suspicion of murder, attempted murder and conspiracy to commit murder. Johnson also is facing two counts of possession of a firearm by a felon, the department said.

"Last year, our community suffered a record number of homicides, including the shooting death of 3-year-old Major Sutton. Today's arrests are the result of a long and difficult investigation demonstrating our commitment to the arrest and prosecution of those responsible for such despicable and cowardly acts," said Bakersfield Police Chief Lyle Martin. "We are grateful to the assisting local, state, and federal agencies as well as the many community members who continue to support the families of those lost to gun violence in our city."

No other arrests are expected at this time, police said.

The child was fatally shot on Nov. 10 at about 11:45 p.m. at his residence after suspects forced their way inside. A woman and 5-year-old boy were also shot, but both survived.

According to Kern County court records, Johnson has had 12 arrests since 2014 and has been convicted in eight cases. His last court appearance was in January, when he pleaded no contest to obstructing/resisting a peace officer.

Court records show Dale and Palms were each arrested once prior to Friday. Dale pleaded no contest in 2012 for being drunk and disorderly. Palms pleaded no contest for misdemeanor battery and obstructing a peace officer last year.

Sutton's death followed that of another boy.

Kason Guyton, 5, was killed in a shooting in February 2017 while in a car in the 600 block of California Avenue. Guyton's 7-year-old brother, Brian, was wounded but survived.

The car was driven by Davyon Vercher, 31, a member of the East Side Crips who was on parole at the time of the shooting, according to court filings. Vercher was dating the boys' mother at the time.

The BPD said the case is still unsolved. A reward of \$20,000 will be given for information that leads to the arrest and filing of a complaint against those responsible for the shooting.

Anyone with information is urged to call the Secret Witness of Kern County phone line at 322-4040. The line is open 24 hours a day.

Citizens can also call the Police Department at 326-3557 or through an anonymous text message by entering 274637 into your phone and texting BPD-CRIMES along with your message.

Joseph Luiz can be reached at 661-395-7368. Follow him on Twitter: @Luiz\_TBC.



Sutton

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## AMBULANCE SERVICES

# County EMS system faces state challenge and March hearing

BY JAMES BURGER  
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A hearing one month from now could bring to closure to a long-running battle between Kern County and the California Emergency Medical Services Authority.

The two sides go before an administrative law judge in Los Angeles on March 13-15.

Chief Deputy County Counsel Gurujodha Khalsa, who is spearheading the case on behalf of the Kern

County Emergency Medical Services Division, said Friday the fight has been going on since 2008.

The stakes are high for Kern County's ambulance companies and the county.

The state EMS Authority has a problem with Kern's "exclusive operating areas," which assign geographic areas of the county to specific ambulance operators as state-approved monopolies. The authority has not



HENRY A. BARRIOS / CALIFORNIAN FILE

**State EMS Systems Division Chief Tom McGinnis wrote this week that a recent report outlining chronic problems with Hall Ambulance's ability to meet Kern County EMS response time standards is proof that the county system is not doing enough to serve and protect its citizens.**

approved Kern County EMS plans for 2012 and 2015.

That means, in essence, that other ambulance companies have free rein

to come in and challenge Hall Ambulance, Delano Ambulance and Liberty

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